

Transportation

What options do people have besides driving their cars home? Larger cities have buses and cabs, but these may stop operating before bar closing time. In smaller towns there may be no choices at all besides designated drivers or volunteer ride services. Every community has unique challenges and opportunities when developing a new service to help people get home safely.

Your mission as a community coalition is to create a new choice: getting those who drink excessively home in some way other than behind the wheel of their own car. It will be a big challenge to come up with a product that is reliable, easy to use and convenient. Once you've cleared that hurdle, you have to find a way to get the word out and attract riders. To be successful your product has to be something that people want to use.

"The general driving age population feels that providing alternative means of transportation (to self driving) for impaired drivers, and making bars and liquor stores more legally responsible for selling to minors/drunken patrons would be the most effective strategies to reduce impaired driving." NHTSA Traffic Tech 2001 National Survey on Drinking and Driving

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/alcohol/traffic-tech2003/TT280.pdf>

In addition to providing appealing benefits, reducing the barriers that keep people from using your transportation service is another important step. Barriers may include:

- ▶ loss of freedom in not having a vehicle immediately available
- ▶ inconvenience of waiting for a ride or walking a distance to get to the vehicle
- ▶ being seen as a wimp who is not able to drive while drunk
- ▶ embarrassment at being associated with an "uncool" ride format
- ▶ not wanting the fun of the evening to end.

You will need to come up with strategies to overcome these barriers or change the way people view them. For example, you might expect people to think that needing a ride home because they are too drunk to drive is embarrassing and they wouldn't want anyone to know. But if you can convince them that planning ahead to take a **Road Crew** ride to, from and among the bars is a cool way to keep the party going, you have successfully anticipated an objection and dealt with it effectively so it didn't keep away riders.



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Key Points

- ▶ Options that offer rides to the bars are important, to help avoid the late-night decision-making problem of "Am I okay to drive home?" Focus group participants said that if you want them to take a ride home, you need to get them to the bar in the first place without their cars. They know that they don't make good decisions at bar closing time, so you need to create a situation where they can't make the wrong decision.
- ▶ Peak time service is crucial and will have the greatest impact in getting impaired drivers off the road.
- ▶ Affordable fares make a big difference in ridership. Listen to the advisors in your target market when determining price for the new service, and be prepared to make changes based on feed-back once the service begins.
- ▶ Individuals in the target go out for the evening in groups, so the ride itself needs to be seen as being a fun, positive social activity.

"Studies continue to show that drinking-driving is primarily a nighttime, weekend phenomenon." National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Alcohol and Highway Safety 2001: A Review of the State of Knowledge
<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/research/AlcoholHighway/index.htm#Contents>

Each community should consider when it is at greatest risk for alcohol-related crashes, and devote the greatest resources to these times. There are many studies showing that there are disproportionate numbers of alcohol-related crashes on Friday and Saturday nights. As the evening progresses, more crashes occur, so the ride service should make more vehicles available to compensate for increased potential demand. You should confirm that this is the case in your community before developing a service schedule. Other times and days can be added if there is significant demand.



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Recommended Transportation Option

In the initial **Road Crew** project, communities were given resources to explore buses, cabs or vans as the means of alternative transportation, along with options for designated drivers or volunteer ride programs. By doing excellent work in listening to their target market and working to overcome barriers, two communities came up with an option that project planners had not conceived: limousines and other luxury cars.

Limousines give instant status and prestige to a ride program. These and other luxury or unique vehicles can help overcome many barriers. To 21-to-34-year-old men, their image is important, and needing a ride home can be embarrassing and is not seen as “cool” by the peer group. But choosing a limo ride is seen as a very cool thing to do, and even adds to the fun of the evening.

Limousines proved to be an excellent choice for an alternative ride option, for many reasons:

- ▶ Many of the reasons identified for why guys drink are the same reasons why they would choose a ride in a limo: to socialize, increase confidence, to have a good time and to get away from the hassles of daily life – a limo is very much in sync with the values of a 21-to-34-year-old male.
- ▶ The novelty was its own incentive for people who had never ridden in a limo.
- ▶ With the **Road Crew** logo on the side, the vehicles created their own publicity.
- ▶ The amount of passengers each limo could transport seemed just right to keep the party going for a group of friends out for the evening.
- ▶ The target market likes to socialize with groups of friends and needs to fit in, and limos provide an environment for this.

Other advantages of limos are that you can create a party mood by playing music and allowing food and beverages in the vehicle, and they can be used for special events, like bachelor and bachelorette parties.

STORM WARNING

Weather may dramatically affect ridership. Consider all four seasons when thinking about your options. A choice that looks good on a 70° spring day might look a lot different when it's 28° and snow is falling.

The only significant disadvantage of limousines is the high start-up costs related to purchase and on-going high maintenance costs for this type of vehicle. The demonstration communities purchased older limos because the initial cost was more affordable, and then found themselves putting a lot of time and money into repairs.



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Other Transportation Options

With any other transportation choice, be aware that your biggest challenge will be making the ride experience seem appealing. With limos, this is naturally built in to the vehicle itself. With a bus, taxi or van, you'll have to work to overcome its lack of positive image. This can be accomplished in ways such as having music, food and videos on board, or having games and prizes. Again, what is important is involving your 21-to-34-year-old target market in the decision to gauge their reactions to your proposed transportation option.

The *Transportation Comparison* worksheet at the end of this section will be a valuable tool for you to evaluate features of the different options as you develop your community's **Road Crew** service.

Staffing Options

You can staff your service with either paid or volunteer drivers. There are advantages and disadvantages to both.

PAID DRIVERS

With paid drivers, you can develop a stable work force while adding jobs to the community. With the drivers as employees, you have a great deal of control over training and job performance. However, paid drivers will significantly add to your payroll and insurance costs.

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

Volunteer drivers can broaden your base of support. Participants may include people from nonprofit organizations, businesses, churches and public health agencies who are interested in making a positive impact on the community's roadway safety. However, the best volunteers seem to be the people who use the service. Especially in small towns, they will take care of each other. In one demonstration community, volunteer drivers are able to use the service for free at all other times, creating a pool of loyal, repeat riders.

THE QUESTION OF INSURANCE

Providing adequate insurance for the vehicles, drivers and passengers is an important item to address. Regardless of the type of vehicle you choose, you'll need to be protected with appropriate collision and liability insurance. One **Road Crew** demonstration community found an innovative way to save money while making sure they had good coverage. They leased the **Road Crew** limos back to their city during the hours of operation and then were covered under the city's insurance policy at no charge to the program.



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While it may be a challenge to manage a large number of drivers, using volunteers can make a big difference in keeping the cost of a ride at reasonable price. Disadvantages to keep in mind if you are considering this option are that the program's reliability will vary based on the number of volunteers and their level of commitment, plus more training, administration and scheduling will be needed than for other options.

DESIGNATED DRIVERS

The **Road Crew** focus group research did not show that the target market would support a designated driver program. This approach is not recommended for the main reason that the designated driver is usually the "least drunk" person in the group, which still puts an impaired driver behind the wheel. It is tempting for designated drivers to cheat on their vow of abstinence, and end the evening having consumed several drinks. Also, no one wants to be sober when his friends are all imbibing; they would much rather pay for a ride than take a night off from drinking. If, however, you are interested in pursuing a designated driver program, there are on-line resources available:

How to Implement a Community-Based Designated Driver Program

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/alcohol/DesignatedDriver/intro1.html>

A Guide to Community-Based Designated Driver Programs

<http://www.ncadd.com/designated/designated1.html>

Action Steps

Worksheets: *Discussion Points*, *Transportation Comparison*, **Road Crew Program Description**

Which way to go? It's time to look at new options by discussing the alternatives as a team. Which seem appealing and why? What are the resources in your community that could make one or a combination of these a success? What could get in your way? Many of the questions you want to ask are listed as Discussion Points. The Transportation Comparison worksheet will help you look at the strengths and weaknesses of each type of vehicle. When you seem to be focusing on a particular choice, the **Road Crew** Program Description will guide you through the details to address before making your final selection. Looking at the options closely should help alert you to potential problems or confirm you are on the right track.



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Transportation Discussion Points

What are the barriers that need to be overcome in order to attract riders?

What are the benefits that need to be provided so that using the new system will be an attractive option?

How can you get people to the bars without their cars in the first place to avoid the problems of poor decision making and of cars left behind?

If a car has to be left behind, can you make arrangements with law enforcement so the owner won't get a ticket for leaving a car overnight? The target may rather risk the low probability of an OWI citation than the high probability of receiving a parking ticket. Law enforcement may be cooperative if you point out that parking tickets are leading people to inappropriate driving behavior.

Should the service include rides back the next morning to pick up cars? Or, should the ride service offer to drive their vehicle home when the patron needs a ride?

Should the ride service have scheduled routes and times, or be on-demand? With either type, will the rider be picked up within a reasonable timeframe, like 30 minutes or less?

If patrons are using the service to ride from bar to bar, what fail-safe method is in place to make sure patrons don't drive their own car home after a night of **Road Crew** rides?

Can you influence loitering laws or their enforcement, so people waiting for a ride don't violate local ordinances?

How do you insure that the service is reliable?

How do you make it "affordable," as defined by the potential riders in your community? What's the right balance between cost and convenience?

How do you handle collecting fares? Can you offer a prepaid option to avoid the problem of people running out of cash at the end of a night on the town?

How do you make the new choice seem "cool?" You're asking the ride system users to check their egos and admit they need help getting home. You need something compelling to overcome this very strong barrier.



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Transportation Comparison

With this chart, you can analyze the features of each vehicle type to decide what will work best for your community and your target market.

Features	Limos and other luxury vehicles	Buses	Taxis	Vans
Size				
Staffing				
Mood				
Special Events				
Scheduled Routes				
On-demand				
To bars				
Among bars				
Home				
Cost				
Wait Times				
Management				
Other				



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Road Crew Program Description

Description of proposed service and vehicles
Appeal and benefits to target market
Advantages and benefits specific to our community that are provided
Disadvantages and barriers specific to our community to be overcome
Resources and partners
Ownership and management
Days and times of ongoing operation
Days and times of seasonal and/or special events operation
Area serviced



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How to access service
Projected passengers per ride and total riders per year
Potential expenses
Potential revenue and sources of revenue
Budget
Staffing – paid or volunteer
Training
Miscellaneous equipment
Safety issues
Liability coverage

